

DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE



photo by Tim Fitzwater



2ND QUARTER 2019
DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Inside Akron Civic Theatre's upgrades

By Marisa Palmieri Shugrue, *Cleveland Magazine*

Akron Civic Theatre is getting a makeover for its 90th birthday — but officials are asking for a little help from the public to complete the restoration of the Jewel on Main Street. Built as a Loew's



theater in 1929, the space, with its signature starry sky, is one of only a few remaining atmospheric theaters by famed designer John Eberson. Today, the concert and performing arts venue is the Akron art scene's bedrock, hosting such diverse acts as Devo and The Black Keys, Fiddler on the Roof and other Broadway hits, and even a game show in May. But now, the historic space needs some upgrades. A \$20 million project in the early 2000s

modernized the building but neglected its Moorish grand lobby. As

downtown Akron undergoes a revitalization through a redeveloped Main Street and a new \$42 million, 100-unit mixed-use complex, theater officials are ready to lift the curtain on the theater's next phase of renovations.

"All of this is going to combine to be part of a transformation of downtown," says Akron Civic Theatre executive director Howard Parr. "It's a 20-year overnight success story." The project, which is already underway and expected to be finished by 2020, completes the interior restoration of the lobby and arcade but goes much further. Most notably, the neighboring Whitelaw building will become a 200-person event space and new outdoor decks will overlook Lock 3 and 4.

While indoor renovations are exciting, Parr says the addition of two outdoor murals, one facing Bowery Street and one facing Main Street, plus a new 15-by-30-foot video monitor that lights up Lock 3, will have the biggest impact on those who live, play and work in downtown Akron.

[Click here to read the full story in Cleveland Magazine.](#)

Akron's Main Street reconstruction project: the promise and the pain of progress

By Jennifer Conn, *WKSU*, photo by Jennifer Conn

The city of Akron is at the midpoint of a major reconstruction project downtown. Bright orange barrels and rubber cones stretch for blocks on Main Street and trucks rumble by kicking up dust. Akron is completely rebuilding the corridor through the heart of downtown.

There's a perception that downtown is a kind of "no go" zone. But to many the work is long overdue.



"I call it the 20 year overnight success story," said Howard Parr, executive director of the Akron Civic Theatre. "This conversation has been going on for a long time. But what we're seeing is the first step of the actual transformation that has been discussed for 20 years."

The Civic is considered Akron's jewel on Main Street, but for nearly two decades it's been in the shadow of six blighted buildings. These buildings are now part of the Bowery project, another major redevelopment along Main Street.

So downtown looks a little like a war zone.

Deputy Mayor and chief of staff James Hardy said the city's aware there's widespread orange barrel fatigue, but he believes the \$31 million project will be worth the pain.

"The Main Street project is going to turn Main Street from a concrete jungle into a greenway, with trees and permanent planters and rainwater gardens. It's going to be something to see," he said. "We're prioritizing light to make sure that anyone who patrons our Main Street businesses feels safe and secure and also kind of inspired."

Kyle Kutuchief of the Knight Foundation said the work will completely change the character of downtown.

"It's now going to be a main street that's going to be a neighborhood. When the community sees the design of the new Main Street it's going to be a place you'll want to walk every day. That's a big transformation."

[Read or listen to the full story on WSKU.org](#)

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several new or existing businesses made the move to downtown Akron or moved to a new location within the district over this past quarter ranging from personal shopping service, retail, food and drink, architecture and more.

Downtown Akron Partnership is now in phase four of the pop-up retail program and continues to meet with interested businesses. Pop up supporter Burton D. Morgan Foundation has extended their current grant to broaden the types of entrepreneurs accepted into this program. New businesses moving into downtown can locate in any available space in the Special Improvement District.



Grocery Grabbers

Pop up businesses

Grocery Grabbers

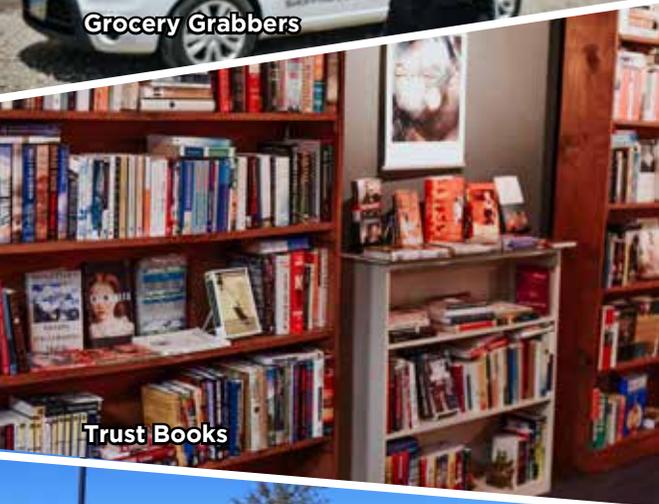
333 S. Main St., #511 | 1-888-774-6472 | www.GoGrabbers.com

Grocery Grabbers is an on-call personal assistant service specializing in grocery shopping and running errands. By calling on their services, clients are able to shop multiple stores and finish a variety of errands through a quick phone call, text or email. The service picks up prescriptions, online orders, deliver gifts and much more. The service is highly customizable.

Trust Books

106 N. Main St. | 330-777-0557

The addition of **Trust Books** to the Northside Cellar retail space brings a very well curated bookstore to downtown Akron. Trust Books aims to provide available knowledge and to cultivate young readers.



Trust Books

New or rebranded businesses

Serendipitea and Coffee Cafe (formerly Wholly Joes)

11 E. Exchange St. | 330-217-1001

Serendipitea and Coffee Cafe offers a variety and breakfast and lunch options, coffee and tea drinks, baked goods and catering options. Located in the Evans Building they offer dine in or carry out.

LevelHEADS

19 N. Nigh St. | 330-436-5080 | www.levelheads.us

LevelHEADS a leader in the mid-west for architecture + interiors, owner's representation services and construction management support. They provides valuable perspectives to handle challenging projects, while assisting in gaining consensus from internal and external constituents.



LevelHEADS

AMP Strategy

39 E. Market St., Ste. 203 | 330-714-2274 | www.ampstrategy.com

Amp Strategy amplifies the authentic voices of organizations and places and provides strategic marketing and communication brands for businesses. The firm offers marketing strategy, creative content, community engagement, public relations, media and communication services.

Northside Marketplace

21 Furnace St. | 234-542-6627 | www.northsidemarketplace.com

The Northside Marketplace welcomes two new vendors bringing the total number of shops and shopkeepers to more than 60. The new vendors are **Noble Theory** and **Tea House Bakery**.



Amp Strategy

MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

Boa Mistura lends perspective on decade of STEM

The **Roots of Rubber** installation by Spanish arts collective Boa Mistura beautifies the plaza of the National Inventors Hall of Fame School for STEM Learning. The installation combines a large-scale painting on the surface of the plaza with a series of three-dimensional forms featuring an inspirational excerpt



of poetry by Akron native, Rita Dove. DAP worked with Akron Public Schools, STEM learners, the city of Akron and the public to enliven this public space with art featuring Rita Dove's poetry with support from the John S. and James L Knight Foundation. A celebration was held on the plaza on

May 24 with the community to officially unveil this new space. A video highlighting the project was created by Ted Sikora and can be viewed [here](#).

Downtown Akron in full bloom and ready for summer

Planter boxes, sidewalk planters and hanging baskets are in place and beautifying the neighborhood thanks to volunteer teams from Goodyear and local businesses in downtown.

Over three days, 25 volunteers from Goodyear assisted DAP staff and ambassadors by planting flowers on the Main Street cycle track, N. High parklet and hanging planter boxes throughout the district. This team also helped build the bocce courts on Cascade Plaza.



DAP also welcomed the return of the Adopt-a-Planter program with 22 planters maintained by 12 companies. These planters can be found along Main, Market, High, Exchange, Mill, Summit and Broadway Streets.

CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING



22,678

TRASH COLLECTED (LBS)



137

MOTORIST/VEHICLE ASSISTANCE

142

GRAFFITI REMOVED

400

PARKING ASSISTANCE

1,003

BUSINESS CONTACTS MADE

2,043

BUS STOPS CLEANED

112

SAFETY ESCORTS



5,312

HOSPITALITY ASSISTANCE

DAP Ambassador stats January-June 2019

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

SEEMA RAO TO JOIN AKRON ART MUSEUM AS SENIOR EXPERIENCE OFFICER

The **Akron Art Museum** announced the appointment of Seema Rao as its new senior experience officer (SXO). With nearly 20 years of museum experience, Rao brings an extensive background in interpretation, programming and digital content development for all audiences.

PAUL PERANTINIDES MAKES TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT TO SUPPORT NEWS ON WKSU

WKSU's state-of-art newsroom will be named **The Perantinides & Nolan Newsroom**, thanks to a transformational \$250,000 gift from attorney Paul G. Perantinides. The newsroom was reimagined and expanded in 2016 and is located within the WKSU Broadcast Center at Kent State University. The interactive space is the heart of WKSU's news and information public service to the Northeast Ohio community, serving as the organizational hub and workspace for the station's award-winning news team and Kent State student interns. This current-use gift is only the second at this level in WKSU history..

NORTHSIDE MARKETPLACE RECOGNIZED AT SBN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON

Northside Marketplace/Northside District was one of more than a dozen commercial development projects recognized at the Small Business News Commercial Development Awards on May 16. Honorees chosen are making a significant impact on the neighborhoods they inhabit as well as the people and organizations involved with bringing them to life. The Northside Marketplace offers visitors a spacious indoor public food market, which includes a year-round farmers market, as well as a hub and social lounge that incorporates a craft beer bar and wine and champagne bar.

METISENTRY CONTINUES TO GROW IN DOWNTOWN AKRON WITH NEW STAFF AND PRODUCTS

Akron-based **Metisentry** announced that veteran technology consultant, Scott Wolf, has been hired as chief operating officer. Wolf joins Metisentry from his former position as CIO with the Berkshire Hathaway Company United Consumer Financial Services. Amy Shepker has been hired as controller and brings with her more than 27-years of experience in corporate accounting and business finance. Jeff Finefrock is the new director of marketing and offers experience in corporate marketing, product management and innovation development. Additionally, Metisentry president Marling Engle, talked to Crain's Cleveland Business about investing in and launching new software products, specifically SaaS or Software as a Service.

FROM EMCEE TO HONOREE, LOCAL HISTORIAN DAVE LIEBERTH NAMED POLSKY AWARD RECIPIENT

A civic activist who has volunteered thousands of hours and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Akron civic, cultural and charitable organizations is the 2019 recipient of Akron Community Foundation's Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award. Dave Lieberth will receive the award at the annual Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award dinner on Tuesday, Oct. 15, at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn. Lieberth, who wrote and produced the Polsky awards program for nearly three decades, will be the 52nd recipient of the award.



Perantinides & Nolan



Northside Marketplace



Metisentry



Dave Lieberth

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

A TEAM OF AMBASSADORS WORK SEVEN DAYS A WEEK TO ENSURE A CLEAN, SAFE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT TO MAKE DOWNTOWN ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE.

SAFETY AMBASSADORS

- Provide escorts to and from businesses and parking locations.
- Report on potential and actual emergencies.
- Work with street level businesses to address security/safety concerns.
- Work to connect panhandlers to available service agencies

CLEANING AMBASSADORS

- Provide cleaning services to downtown sidewalks.
- Remove litter and graffiti.
- Identify and complete special projects.
- Maintain downtown planters and hanging baskets.

HOURS OF OPERATION:
Monday-Saturday: 7 a.m.-11 p.m.
Sunday: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

FOR AMBASSADOR SERVICES OR TO REPORT A PROBLEM, CALL THE ON-DUTY SUPERVISOR DURING HOURS OF OPERATION AT 330-706-7383.

QUARTERLY DISTRICT MTGS

Quarterly meetings for downtown stakeholders are held the second Thursday of the month. RSVP at www.downtownakron.com/district

Canal District:

Aug. 8, Nov. 14
2-3 p.m. | Barley House

Northside:

Sept. 12, Dec. 12
1-2 p.m. | Jilly's Music Room

Historic Arts:

Oct. 10
10-11 a.m. | Main Library

SUMMIT COUNTY EXECUTIVE APPOINTS AKRON FINANCE DIRECTOR AS TOP COUNTY ACCOUNTANT



Diane Miller-Dawson will retire as director of finance for the city of Akron and join the county of Summit as the executive's director of finance and budget in September. Miller-Dawson began her career with the city in 1978 and has served as director of finance since 2004. At the county, she will succeed Brian Nelsen, who will be replacing Jason Dodson as chief of staff to Executive Shapiro in September.

NIGHTLIGHT CINEMA CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF BRINGING INDEPENDENT FILMS TO AKRON



Propelled by Steve Felix, Akron Film + Pixel group and a \$120,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, **The Nightlight** opened on July 1, 2014. In 2017, The Nightlight opened Lounge 237, a comfy room in the back of the building, and The Nightlight Film Society, which features special screenings. The theater averages about 16,000 a year in attendance, and earns about \$125,000 in

ticket sales annually.

AKRONYM CELEBRATES ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN DOWNTOWN



Akronym Brewing is celebrating one year in downtown. Connecting with the Akron community is essential to Akronym Brewing and being part of the redevelopment of the district became a driving force in choosing the current location at High and Market. The brewery plans to expand its distribution in the next year along with plans to start canning according to co-founder Shawn Adams.

AKRON CULTURAL PLAN



Help Akron develop its first city-wide **cultural plan** by sharing the arts, cultural, historic and environmental experience wanted in neighborhoods. The more voices, the stronger the collective roadmap to the future will be. The community is invited to attend public events to cover what is possible while creating a public art piece that will be displayed in Akron. Learn more at AkronCulturalPlan.com

EMPLOYERS FOR HEALTH CONSORTIUM STRIVES TO KEEP GREATER AKRON BUSINESSES HEALTHY



Employers for Health Consortium is committed to building a strong and healthy workforce in the greater Akron region through the development of healthy workforces and worksites. Businesses are encouraged to use the CDC worksite health scorecard which can be used at any sized worksite. It can lead to a healthier work environment by establishing a baseline evaluation and allows for tracking improvements over time, allowing employers to more effectively direct resources to support employee health and well-being. Learn more at live.schpoh.org/wellness.

TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

Kyle Kutuchief: Small wins bring big change to Akron (ABJ editorial)

Can you feel it? No, not the jackhammers of Main Street construction. I'm talking about the comeback of the city of Akron. We are at a tipping point: one taking us toward a new, optimistic future for our Rust Belt city. From the shores of Summit



Lake, to the s'mores roasting in Park East, to the bricks being tuck-pointed at downtown's Bowery Building, small wins are adding up to big change for the city of Akron.

Since 2015, Akron has been a part of a national initiative, Reimagining the Civic Commons, supported by national foundations and local partners. The initiative seeks to revitalize public spaces — such as parks, trails, libraries and recreation centers — as catalysts for

connecting people of all backgrounds, cultivating trust and countering trends of social and economic division. To advance these goals, local leaders are working with residents and stakeholders to improve the network of public assets along three miles of the Towpath Trail connecting downtown Akron, Park East and Summit Lake. [Read the full editorial here.](#)

Transportation experts looking outside traditional RTA resources for better service

By Kevin Barry, NEWS 5 Cleveland

The Fund for Our Economic Future and Akron's Metro RTA are starting a multi-year process to find ways to better serve riders using public transportation to get to work.

"A lot of the riders that I ride with are dependent on [the bus lines]," said Downtown Akron Ambassador Darrell Stamps.

With all the costs that come with owning a car, it makes more sense for people like Stamps and his fellow riders to take the bus to their jobs.

Stamps says his neighbors use Metro RTA's lines to get all over the region.

"A lot of them work in the industries just on the outskirts of Akron," said Stamps.

But one big problem across Northeast Ohio is getting those workers to their jobs on time.

Fund for Our Economic Future Vice President Bethia Burke says many businesses reached out, frustrated that they couldn't find reliable workers.

"The result of what we were seeing was a workplace behavior challenge but it was really a transportation challenge," said Burke.

For the places where a traditional bus and bus route might not be the best option, The Paradox Prize and the Akron Metro RTA are exploring different ways to connect workers to their jobs.

FEATURED PROPERTY

380 S. Main St.

Hoff & Leigh | 330-940-9360

This downtown creative office/retail space offers 3,600 sq. ft. of space on three floors with storage space on the lower level. It features an open floorplan and is move in ready. Close to restaurants, retail, banking, sports and entertainment with an expansive sidewalk/exterior space.



FEATURED BUSINESS

FULL SPECTRUM MARKETING

222 S. Main St. | fsm.agency

Full Spectrum Marketing focuses on audience while blending the core principles of advertising – reach and frequency – to build a comprehensive integrated marketing and communications plan complete with execution and measurement.



PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION



Local businesses invited to become partners in the 2020 States census

The once-in-a-decade population count provides rich data on communities, including trends in the population, projections of growth and information on demographics. This data is valuable to businesses - they help inform better decision-making regarding business expansions, closures, hiring strategies and other business practices to decrease perceived risks and increase return on investments. Businesses are asked to spread the word about the census and help ensure a complete and accurate count.

A complete count of every person living in the United States has tremendous benefits for a business, its customers and employees.

Census data provides the basis for distributing grants for economic development and inform business decisions, such as local business expansion. It creates projections of growth and help identify prime locations to open new operations or shut old ones. It helps business owners enhance hiring practices and identify skilled workers. It offers valuable information on your customer base, including income levels, household size, and ownership, which can further inform business strategies such as pricing and locations. And determines how much funding a community receives and its representation in government.

Find out more and how to get involved at 2020census.gov.



Mayor Horrigan kicks off 2019 Akron street resurfacing program; city to pave approximately 54 miles of roadway thanks to Safety and Streets Dollars

The city of Akron is working on resurfacing 54 centerline miles of city streets. Akron City Council voted 11-0 to authorize the work to begin.

The 2019 resurfacing program is budgeted at \$7 million, including \$4.15 million in funding made available through the 1/4% *Safety and Streets* income tax increase approved by voters in 2017 (Issue 4). The city grades the condition of each street and paves the "worst first," taking into consideration traffic conditions and clustering streets together to reduce mobilization costs and maximize efficiency. Funds for resurfacing are distributed as evenly as possible amongst the city's ten wards.

"This year, we will be paving roughly 37 more miles than we could have without these new Safety and Streets tax dollars at work," Mayor Dan Horrigan said. "I am proud to once again be keeping my promise to the community to invest these funds directly into safer and smoother streets in neighborhoods all across Akron.

A list of streets scheduled for resurfacing in 2019 (including alternates) is available [here](#); a map displaying those streets, along with streets paved since 2013 is available [here](#). The program begins in a different ward each year and rotates across the city.



WHAT'S GOING ON IN DOWNTOWN

ELEVATE AKRON YOGA FESTIVAL

Thursday, July 18 | 4:30-9:30 p.m.

Lock 3



Mark your calendars for the sixth Elevate Akron Outdoor Yoga Festival & Vinyasa Class at Lock 3. Celebrate yoga during this event that highlights the yoga studios, businesses, and people who make this city such a special home. All levels welcome.

DOWNTOWN@DUSK

Thursdays, July 11, 18, 25, Aug. 1 | 6:30 p.m.

Akron Art Museum | 1 S. High St.



Now in its 35th season, Downtown@Dusk presents an eclectic mix of original music, including jazz, roots rock and blues in the museum's Bud and Susie Rogers Garden. The free, outdoor concerts are held rain or shine with an exciting line-up of local artists.

ROLLER DANCE PARTY

Friday, Aug. 2 | 7-10 p.m.

Cascade Plaza | 1 Cascade Plaza



Lace up your skates for old school action with the roller dance party on Cascade. The event features a DJ with skates available to rent or dance on the inside of the "rink" with food trucks and more. Skating is on the concrete.

TASTE OF IRELAND

Friday/Saturday, Aug. 16-17 | times TBA

Lock 3 | 200 S. Main St.



Come to Lock 3 for a wee bit of food, drink and a whole lot of Blarney. This festival offers free admission and variety of local Irish musicians. Come down for music, delicious Irish eats and lots of family fun.

Aug. 16:

7 p.m. The Juke Hounds

8:30 p.m. Desire - U2 Tribute Act

Aug. 17: line up to be announced.

RUBBER CITY JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

Thursday-Sunday, Aug. 22-25 | times vary per venue

BLU Jazz, Musica, Maiden Lane, High St. Hop House, Akron Civic Theatre, Akron Art Museum and Main Library



Three days. Seven venues. Loads of free fun. The Rubber City Jazz & Blues Festival is dedicated to preserving Akron's rich and vibrant history in jazz and blues and showcasing today's stars.

AKRON ROUNDTABLE: TOM RIDGE

Thursday, Sept. 19 | 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

UA's Quaker Station | 135 S. Broadway Ave.



Akron Roundtable brings speakers to Akron who inform, educate and stimulate listeners on topics of importance to the region, country and world. September's luncheon features Tom Ridge chairman of Ridge Global and former secretary of US Department of Homeland Security.

LOVE AKRON NETWORK'S 8TH ANNUAL AWARDS BREAKFAST

Tuesday, Sept. 24 | 7:30-9 a.m.

John S. Knight Center | 77 E. Mill St.



Join the Love Akron Network for the 8th annual awards breakfast. This year's theme is Flourish with a focus of recognizing many servant leaders throughout the morning who are helping the greater Akron Area to flourish. The guest speaker is best-selling author, Ken Blanchard.

"IT WAS FIFTY YEARS AGO TODAY: A TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES' WHITE ALBUM"

Saturday, Sept. 28 | 8 p.m.

Akron Civic Theatre | 185 S. Main St.



Rundgren Radio will be presenting a "It Was Fifty Years Ago Today: A Tribute To The Beatles' White Album" concert featuring Todd Rundgren, Christopher Cross, Micky Dolenz of The Monkees, Jason Scheff (Chicago) and Joey Molland (Badfinger)

performing their greatest hits along with songs from The Beatles White Album.



103 S. High St., 4th floor, Akron, OH 44308
Phone: 330-374-7676 | Ambassadors: 330-706-7383
Email: info@downtownakron.com
www.downtownakron.com



#DOWNTOWNAKRON

Photo by Tim Fitzwater